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Summary Report

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Summary of Presentations Edmonton Public Forum

March 26-27, 1992

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

TOWARD 2000 TOGETHER

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92-07887/

TOWARD 2000 TOGETHER

EDMONTON REGIONAL PUBLIC FORUM
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

Edmonton Hilton Hotel

March 26-27, 1992

GOVERNMENT PANEL

Hon. Peter Elzinga (Chair) - Minister of Economic Development and Trade

Hon. Nancy Betkowski - Minister of Health

Mr. Mike Cardinal - MLA, Athabasca-Lac La Biche

Mr. Doug Cherry - MLA, Lloydminster

Mr. Robert Fischer - MLA, Wainwright

Mr. Halvar Jonson - MLA, Ponoka-Rimbey

Hon. Doug Main - Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism

Hon. Rick Orman - Minister of Energy

Mr. Walter Paszkowski - MLA, Smoky River

PRESENTATIONS

THURSDAY, March 26

1. City of Edmonton - Mayor Jan Reimer
2. University of Alberta - Dr. Paul Davenport, President
3. Samson Cree Nation - Roy Louis
4. Ernst & Young - Gordon Barefoot
5. Fort Saskatchewan Regional Industrial Association - Dennis Maschmeyer
6. Canadian Federation of Independent Business - Doug Wright
7. County of Strathcona - Elmer Haas
8. Edmonton Economic Development Authority - Chairman Ken Pilip, Past Chairman Bob Rosen, Doug Clement
9. Morinville Economic Development Board -- Bea Fricson and Rena Bland
10. Alberta Construction Association - Merv Ellis, Larry Kehoe
11. Alberta Teachers' Association - Frances Savage, President
12. Canadian Dehydrators' Association - Bryan Davidson, Executive Director
13. Alberta Motion Pictures' Association - Bruce Harvey, President
14. Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta - President Steve Allan, Cam Crawford, Steve Glover
15. Lamont/Two Hills Business Development Centre - Frank Simon, Manager
16. Alberta Real Estate Association - Les Philips
17. Federation of Alberta Naturalists - Carol Smith, Director
18. Stony Plain Economic Development Board - Barrie Day, Chairman
19. Athabasca Regional Economic Development Association - Edwina Bobocel, Executive Director
20. Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Alberta Division - Bob Saari, President
21. Canadian Chemical Producers' Association - Art LeNeveu, Ottawa, and Vern Morgensen
22. City of St. Albert Economic Development Advisory Board - Paul Chalifoux and Bruce Randall
23. Private Citizen - Tom Eger
24. Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce - Ace Cetinski

25. Urban Core Support Network - Sherry McKibben

26. Edmonton Research Park - Glenn Mitchell

27. Banff National Park - Jan Bloomfield

28. KenAgra Management Services Ltd. - Ken Stickland, President

29. Book Publishers Association of Alberta - Dennis Johnson, President

FRIDAY, March 27

30. Edmonton Recycling Society/Recycling Council of Alberta
Dr. Cornelius Guenter

31. Securities Marketplace Group - Bill Smith

32. Alberta Chamber of Resources - Don Currie and Erdal Yildirim

33. Alberta Industrial Property Taxpayers' Group - Mel Coutanche

34. Alberta Chamber of Commerce - Darren Reeder

35. Edmonton Chamber of Commerce - John Knebel, Chairman,
and Dianne Keefe

36. Forum for Action on the Workplace - Larry Odegard and
Vincent Fabian

37. Metro Edmonton Economic Development Team - John Barnard

38. Alberta Home Builders Association - Dennis Little

39. Northern Alberta Institute of Technology - Dr. S.G. Souch, President

40. Alberta Plastics Recycling Association - Gary Horan,
Executive Vice-President

41. Van Horne Institute - Merrienne Duncan

42. Edmonton Friends of the North - Lorraine Vetsch, Co-chairperson

43. Canadian Organization of Small Business - Don Eastcott

Open Forum

44. Private Citizen - Doug Pruden

45. Grant MacEwan Community College - Dr. Gerald Kelly, President

46. Private Citizen - Bruce Matichuk

PUBLIC FORUMS ON THE ECONOMY WIND UP IN EDMONTON

The Alberta government's series of Toward 2000 Together public forums on the economy wound up in Edmonton March 26 and 27 with more than 45 presentations by groups representing a wide range of interests from industrial taxpayers and manufacturers to educational institutions and environmentalists. Presenters were responding to an invitation issued last August by Premier Don Getty seeking Albertans' input for the development of a new economic strategy for the province. They offered suggestions on issues ranging from safety in the workplace and the economics of recycling to Native business development and support for the province's motion picture and book publishing industries.

Peter Elzinga, Minister of Economic Development and Trade and MLA, Sherwood Park, chaired the meeting, which was held at the Edmonton Hilton Hotel. He headed up a government panel which received and responded to the submissions. Panel members who attended portions of the two-day forum included: Health Minister and Edmonton-Glenora MLA, Nancy Betkowski; Mike Cardinal, MLA, Athabasca-Lac La Biche ; Doug Cherry, MLA Lloydminster; Robert Fischer, MLA, Wainwright; Halvar Jonson , MLA Ponoka - Rimbey; Hon. Doug Main, Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism and MLA, Edmonton-Parkallen; Hon. Rick Orman, Energy Minister, Chairman of the Economic Planning Cabinet Committee, and MLA, Calgary-Montrose; and Walter Paszkowski, MLA, Smoky River.

In his welcoming remarks Mr. Elzinga said the Toward 2000 Together public forums were launched in recognition of the wealth of expertise and talent among Albertans and the government's desire to draw their ideas.

Mr. Orman outlined some of the common themes that have emerged from the forums to date. Among these are the importance of building on Alberta's existing strengths, particularly its agricultural and energy resources and industries, and diversifying through value-added production in those sectors. He noted also the common call for the government to play a facilitating role in economic development, helping to form the strategic alliances needed to compete in the global economy. He pointed out that in the past part of the government's role was to put in place the infrastructure needed for a resource-based economy. Now, he said, the government is seeking input on the infrastructure requirements of a knowledge-based economy.

SUBMISSIONS

The following are highlights of the written and verbal submissions presented during the forum:

Thursday, March 26

1. City of Edmonton: Mayor Jan Reimer

Mayor Reimer outlined Edmonton's vision and economic development strategy to the year 2000 and beyond.

The City's vision is of Edmonton as Canada's Western Capital, "a prosperous city whose wealth benefits all." The Mayor cited the City's three-pronged approach to diversify and be less dependent on international oil and agricultural prices:

1. To nurture Edmonton's historic role as a service centre for natural resource-based industries -- as the Gateway to the North.

2. To expand the region's ability to add value to natural resources.

3. To earn Edmonton a leadership role in knowledge-based industries, drawing on the City's "superb" advanced education and research network.

Mayor Reimer stressed the need to work together in partnership to build and invest in our educational network. This is essential to upgrade our basic labor force as unskilled jobs disappear and to train specialists to meet the growing demand for high technology skills.

She then presented highlights of the City's 13 action plans designed to support its strategy. Key among them is the need for regional coordination to address crucial problems such as waste management and to market the Edmonton area as a unified business and tourism entity. She suggested the province should show leadership in encouraging regional integration.

Mayor Reimer said Alberta must stop taking its large urban centres for granted, pointing out the interdependency of "big cities and their country neighbors." High unemployment and rising social service needs of big cities is the other side of the coin of rural depopulation. The Mayor urged the government to acknowledge the increasing needs of Alberta's cities and to place a high priority on meeting those needs. Citing Edmonton's high unemployment rate and deteriorating infrastructure, she suggested Alberta follow the example of Manitoba, which recently announced a jointly funded public works program with Winnipeg to put people back to work on infrastructure repair. "Urban infrastructure is not a drain on the economy. Rather, it's an investment," she said.

She also cited the upcoming review of the Electrical Energy Marketing Agency as another issue that divides Albertans along traditional lines. She reminded Albertans of the debt they owe the north for its resource royalties and touted the benefits of one-system planning to maximize our resources.

Mr. Orman asked Mayor Reimer how Edmonton is working with Calgary to overcome their traditional competitiveness with respect to the need for cooperation.

Mayor Reimer reminded him that cooperation was one of her commitments when she ran for office and said Edmonton and Calgary are working together on provincial issues facing cities, such as out-of-school care funding. She said the City acknowledges that the province doesn't have the resources to treat both cities equally in all areas, but must treat each according to its individual strengths and needs.

2. University of Alberta: Dr. Paul Davenport

Dr. Davenport said the University welcomes the challenge of helping to prepare Albertans for competition in a global knowledge-based economy. To meet the challenge, it is necessary to look not only at the quality of teaching and research but at human and social issues as well. These include:

- a quality of life that allows business, the arts and the sciences to flourish in combination;
- accessiblity to university education for aboriginals, visible minorities and the physically disabled; and
- retraining and upgrading through continuing education programs developed in cooperation with business and industry and health and social service agencies.

Dr. Davenport made several points regarding the University's role. Highlights include:

1. The University believes access to higher education should be open to all individuals. The existing transfer system is the most cost-efficient approach to access.

2. Alberta's policy-makers must distinguish between research-intensive universities and other institutions of advanced education. The research role of universities is critical to the advancement of any economy. Dr. Davenport cited examples of numerous companies -- and jobs -- that have been created to transfer technology developed in the University laboratory to the marketplace. He listed several more examples of University research with economic implications, including the basic research which led to commercialization of the Canadian Cold Buster bar and research that resulted in a vaccine for Hepatitis B.

3. The University supports the developing of R&D linkages among the academic, government and private sectors and the government's continued funding for research infrastructure. Key elements of the science and technology infrastructure at the U of A include: one of the major research libraries in North America, the University's telecommunications network, the Environmental Research Studies Centre and research programs funded by the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research.

4. High-performance telecommunications networks are the superhighways of the future. Alberta is woefully behind in this area, but the University is committed to working with the government in coordinating telecommunications network development.

Nancy Betkowski asked if there is anything the government can do to get the entire post-secondary sector working together to ensure the best use of resources and better access to knowledge.

Dr. Davenport said the province has the best transfer system in the country, but it can be improved. To best use available resources, Alberta's post-secondary institutions need to identify their strong areas and specialize. Institutions can also do more to collaborate on research.

3. Samson Cree Nation: Roy Louis

Mr. Louis said the number of Native people pursuing self-sufficiency has increased dramatically since 1986, particularly in Alberta. But Native people are still among the most disadvantaged in Alberta. Governments cannot afford to sustain the present level of Indian poverty.

Mr. Louis said that, while he has great difficulty with the Indian Act, it does provide immediate tax benefits for status and Treaty Indians, and in certain situations for non-Indian investors doing business with Indians. He listed a number of these benefits, then suggested the following ideas to the Alberta government:

1. Indian reserves need support in developing their infrastructure. The Province should help design a system which allows the First Nations access to infrastructure financing with charges back to Indian Affairs in Ottawa.

2. Financial institutions operating in Alberta could be required to make perhaps 1% of lending funds available for Native business projects, creating a multi-million-dollar pool and spreading the risk.

3. There are over 900,000 acres of arable land on reserves but only a tiny fraction is farmed by Indian people. The province could support Indian farmers by requesting the federal government to provide loan guarantees, including Indians on appropriate trade missions, and providing them with information on the latest agricultural technologies.

4. The Alberta government should facilitate development of training and hiring programs in the forest industry for Indian people.

5. The government must work to raise educational levels of Natives and encourage Native students to look at careers in science, commerce and other professions.

6. The government should support the Minister of Tourism in his efforts to market Native culture as a tourist attraction.

7. The government should work with industry and First Nations to promote joint ventures for industries on Native lands.

8. Alberta Economic Development and Trade should create a unit to provide Native people with information on business basics and opportunities for international trade.

Treaty Indians can contribute to keeping Alberta the strong, vital province it is.

Mr. Cardinal agreed the time is right for major changes. He said Alberta is a leader in dealing with aboriginal issues and assured Mr. Louis the government will look closely at his recommendations.

4. Ernst & Young: Gordon Barefoot

Ernst & Young held two public forums for its clients, in Edmonton and Calgary, plus two client focus groups to respond to the Toward 2000 Together initiative. The following are highlights of a survey of their views:

- Government has a role to play in economic development, but a balanced budget is the first priority.

- Businesses should become more directly involved in helping educators develop skills training, and the private sector should spend more money to fund improved training and education.

- The key to economic growth lies in adding value to our resources.

- The government should clarify the composition and purpose of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

A clear theme was that the government's role should be to maintain a positive business climate rather than try to pick winners and losers. Specifically, the government should:

1. produce a clear statement of economic development principles, in effect, an "economic constitution" defining roles and responsibilities of government in this area; and

2. provide more objective information on how the economy is working and whether government policies and programs are getting results.

Specific ideas include:

- Refocus the Heritage Fund on the environment and economic development.

- Refocus other government economic programs to infrastructure and business climate support with tax incentives as the cornerstone.

Government must set an example in productivity improvement. Specifically, government should establish a program to measure the effectiveness of its departments; consider rationalization of certain departments; and develop incentive-based compensation systems for government workers.

Mr. Fischer asked how the labour force might fit into government productivity improvement efforts, given that labour accounts for 80% of government expenditures.

Mr. Barefoot acknowledged that labour has improved productivity over the past decade by embracing technology, but the rest of the world is ahead of us and we need to do more.

5. Fort Saskatchewan Regional Industrial Association: Dennis Maschmeyer

The Association represents 20 companies between Fort Saskatchewan and Bruderheim which employ about 4,000 people and produce approximately $2 billion worth of goods, the majority of which are sold outside of Canada.

The Association believes we need to focus on the process of quality improvement to become more competitive. Our work force must be educated in the tools of quality and how to apply them in order to improve productivity. Government must set the example by implementing quality within its own workforce. We can no longer afford what amounts to a 25% waste in our economy due to non-productivity.

This focus on the quality improvement process will involve no less than a cultural change, and all sectors must be prepared to work together effectively to make that change.

6. Canadian Federation of Independent Business: Doug Wright

The Federation will present a full submission shortly. Mr. Wright limited his presentation to some ideas on a small business strategy for economic development.

CFIB represents 7,000 owners of small and medium sized businesses in Alberta. The Federation's survey of its members indicated that some 76% feel there is an inadequate balance in the government's economic development strategy. The effectiveness of government's efforts have eroded recently with its increased hands-on involvement in the economy.

Mr. Wright said there are about 100,000 small businesses in Alberta -- among them about 15,000 are starting up and 15,000 expanding each year. The government's strategy should be to enhance the success of those 30,000 new business initiatives. What has really fueled diversification in the province so far is a favorable business climate, such as low relative taxation. This favorable climate is more important than targeted economic development strategies.

The Federation's recommendations are that the government keep a low profile and concentrate, for example, on:

- providing sustained action to lever business development across the economy;
- providing more information;
- acting as broker; and
- enabling community-based financing initiatives.

7. County of Strathcona: Elmer Haas

The County focused its submission on five issues:

1. **Diversification:** Alberta's economic future depends on a strategy of diversification, and we should look first at the diversification potential of the province's base industries.

2. **Education:** Our economic future depends on an educated, trained work force. We cannot continue to tolerate a brain drain from Alberta.

3. **Environment:** We can't continue to exploit our environment. Enough is enough.

4. **The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund:** The Fund must be used to help smaller businesses, not just a few major companies.

5. **Development from within:** We must focus on encouraging cottage industries, recognize their job-creating potential and help them "leave the nest" when they're ready to grow by providing small business incubators.

8. Edmonton Economic Development Authority: Ken Pilip, Bob Rosen, Doug Clement

Mr. Pilip began with the general comment that the Authority believes government should "support wealth creation before distributing wealth." Existing companies must be encouraged to upgrade and diversify into value-added production.

Mr. Clement said the Alberta government's diversification efforts in recent years have yielded results, particularly in the area of R&D. For the future knowledge-based economy we need a stronger alliance among industry, labour, government and academia. Alberta should concentrate in the future on exporting knowledge rather than physical products.

The Authority recommends that the government, among other things:

- identify its economic development investments that yield the greatest results and concentrate on them;
- provide more infrastructure support;
- maintain a competitive taxation system;
- provide more information on opportunities in Alberta for foreign investment;
- target education spending at the needs of the marketplace;
- provide more support for Edmonton in its global promotions;
- increase total investment in R&D, perhaps through matching funds; and
- streamline its bureaucracy so as not to impede investment;

Mr. Orman asked how Alberta's foreign offices can help Alberta businesses market their products and services globally.

Mr. Rosen said the government already does an excellent job laying the base. It also needs to involve more business players, as well as government employees, in trade missions.

9. Morinville Economic Development Board: Bea Fricson and Rena Bland

The submission answers five questions from the Toward 2000 Together document with five principles Morinville has adopted for its economic development model.

1. Spending on economic development: Spend more on securing economic diversification, but not at the expense of social programs. Instead, streamline government. In particular, reduce spending on public input initiatives. "We've participated in at least four of them. You have our input, now it's time to set goals."

2. Environmental protection: Go Green. Environmental protection should be a cornerstone of our new economic development strategy. Restrictions should be put on the forestry, mining, and oil and gas industries to ensure a clean, lasting landscape. New environmental technologies may offer economic diversification opportunities.

3. Responsibility for education and training: Government should set the standards for education, determine key areas for improvement, and support private industry initiatives for worker training.

4. Regional and community development: Government should stop providing financial incentives for companies to locate in rural areas. This has not worked. Instead, the government should encourage community development from within. Not every incorporated centre will survive. Government support should take the form of intelligence gathering, infrastructure development and seed funding programs, such as BIAC.

5. Will Albertans be better off in 10 years? Yes, if policy changes take place. Business will be attracted to the province by a positive investment climate, fair tax burden and heightened quality of life for its workforce.

10. Alberta Construction Association: Merv Ellis, Larry Kehoe

Mr. Kehoe highlighted significant points of the Association's brief. The construction industry in Alberta has an annual business volume of $10 billion and employs approximately 87,000 workers.

1. Government's first priority should be to encourage private sector investment. This requires a thorough review of legislation and regulations that impact on business cost. Roadblocks to development approvals must be removed and the process streamlined. A case in point is the Natural Resources Conservation Act, which provides for intervenor funding by the potential developer. This is ludicrous. Alberta needs one central agency responsible for development approval. The current process causes a drain on business and discourages investment.

2. Government should encourage risk-taking through tax incentive programs, but let the marketplace pick the winners and losers. Financial support by government should take the form of infrastructure development.

3. Government can help Alberta business become globally competitive by helping to eliminate regional and inter-provincial trade barriers.

4. Government should maintain its free-enterprise philosophy and resist socialistic trends.

Mr. Orman said the NRCB was a first in North America and was created with the intent to balance opposing interests. He said he appreciates comments that will help in fine-tuning the process.

11. Alberta Teachers' Association: Frances Savage

The Association addressed the issues of education and labour from the Toward 2000 Together document.

With respect to education:

1. Schools should not become "little factories for the production of workers." There has to be a broader context.

2. It's almost impossible to predict which skills will be needed 12 years from now, so we should concentrate more on general rather than specific skills.

On labour, the Association believes we should not treat labour as a commodity, but must look at what workers hope for themselves. Labour and business need to work together to define goals and to accomplish those goals. Specifically:

1. Schools and business can work together to help develop the new kinds of skills workers will need in the future.

2. The Association is interested in helping to reduce management/labour conflicts.

3. Government should promote minimum wage standards that maintain quality of life for workers.

4. Strategies must be found to give employees direct input into decision-making.

Mr. Orman asked if the educational delivery system is contemporary with the way children receive messages today.

Answer: Textbooks take seven years to develop and become obsolete fast. Yes, we have to look at other forms of delivery.

12. Canadian Dehydrators' Association: Bryan Davidson

The Association represents the alfalfa sector and provides a market development program abroad for its members.

The industry is a growth sector in agriculture and exports pellets and cubes into Japan and other Pacific Rim countries. These markets offer opportunities for even more growth in the future.

Yet the industry does not get the recognition it wants and deserves. In fact, it was not even mentioned in the government's "Freedom to Choose" document among value-added industries, and the industry is not included in numerous government farm support programs.

With respect to needed change, there should be more exchange between the public and private sector.

Mr. Paszkowski said he has a private member's motion ready to put forward regarding the alfalfa industry, but pointed out that federal approval is also necessary to include the industry in certain joint programs.

13. Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association: Bruce Harvey

Mr. Harvey presented highlights of a study AMPIA carried out recently. In 1983 Alberta and B.C. were on equal footing regarding independent production. Since then, B.C. has built a strong film infrastructure and has left Alberta far behind.

The motion picture industry is a good diversification industry because it:

- has an impact on tourism;
- creates a big ripple effect on the economy;
- is environmentally friendly;
- uses a highly skilled labour force; and
- is an equal opportunity industry with respect to gender.

Alberta's share of the Canadian film industry is not representative of its share of the population or its contribution to the national economy.

Alberta can raise money for the film industry apart from personal taxes by:

1. Taxing funds gained by foreign distributors through access to the Alberta market. Every province except Alberta imposes a tax on theatre revenues.

2. Encouraging private investment through capital cost allowance.

Other suggestions:

The Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation (the first of its kind in Canada), should have its funding renewed annually, so it can be free to take more calculated risks when selecting films for equity investment.

ACCESS should take the Channel 4 (England) approach, i.e. stop doing its own production and move its money into independent production.

Mr. Elzinga said the government is looking at legislative changes with respect to the film industry.

14. Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta: Steve Allan, Cam Crawford, and Steve Glover

The Institute believes Alberta's natural resources will not guarantee our economic future. One of our biggest assets is our people and their skills.

Government's role should be to act as facilitator rather than intervenor.

Government should concentrate on:

- education and training;
- public safety;
- maintenance of an effective social safety net;
- development of public infrastructure;
- providing information;
- protecting the environment; and
- maintaining a competitive business environment.

The only legitimate fiscal option for government is to cut spending and reduce the cost of government. With more realistic financial reporting, government must show Albertans the necessity of reducing their expectations of government.

Alberta should pursue value-added production in its resource industries and should not attempt to "buy" new businesses unless they fit into our strengths.

Possible uses for the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund include:

- creating an endowment to support post-secondary education;
- paying down the province's accumulated debt, with legislative provisions to ensure the province would not be able to go into debt again; and
- maintaining the status quo.

Mr. Orman asked how government can get people to lower their expectations.

Mr. Allan replied that government has to tell people honestly just how bad the situation is.

15. Lamont/Two Hills Business Development Centre: Frank Simon

Mr. Simon reported the results of the Lamont/Two Hills Area's recent economic development assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. The weaknesses are so numerous, mere survival is in question:

- the population is declining rapidly;
- the commercial sector is weak and there is significant trade leakage;
- improved roads in the area have only served to make the small centres satellites to the larger centres;
- disposable incomes are low;
- there is little diversification;
- the population is aging and 40% have less than a Grade 9 education; and
- houses that were built for $80,000 in the late '70s are vacant and being offered for under $40,000.

Solutions cannot be developed locally. The community will not survive without structural intervention.

Mr. Elzinga asked how the government could be more supportive in helping the area overcome its problems.

Mr. Simon said the government can help in offsetting the area's two biggest weaknesses: aging population and low education level. The government could look at developing ethanol and food processing industries in the area. It could also provide adult education to upgrade the technological skill levels in the population.

16. Alberta Real Estate Association: Les Philips

The Association's submission is the result of a province-wide survey of its more than 8,000 members. Highlights include:

1. A balanced budget is a must.

2. Bureaucracy at the executive level of government should be downsized and departments merged for greater efficiency.

3. Alberta should lead in working toward eliminating inter-provincial trade barriers.

4. Advanced education should be more available, based on industry needs. There should be a closer relationship between education and industry and more emphasis placed on on-the-job training.

5. Schools should operate year-round.

6. Government should provide more business counselling and direct its efforts at retaining existing businesses and enhancing value-added industries. The corporate tax system should be simplified.

7. Government should continue, even accelerate, the privatization process.

8. Consideration should be given to disposing of excess government lands and a central department established for all government acquisitions and disposals.

9. Government should not be in competition with private industry.

Mr. Paszkowski said he agrees with the concept of a 12-month school year. Millions of dollars of assets lie unused for too long under the current system.

17. Federation of Alberta Naturalists: Carol Smith

The Federation believes Alberta's economic strategies must steer a distinct course for a sustainable and self-sufficient economy that will ensure biodiversity and contribute to Albertans' quality of life.

Ms. Smith questioned the concept of "sustainable economic growth." This is not possible, she said. She pointed out that our inherited human-centred value system treats the Earth as a "resource pie to be divided up among us" and ignores the fact that humans are part of Earth's ecosphere.

What does this mean for the economy in the future?

As one example, land use planning must be based on preserving biodiversity. Current reforestation practices, for instance, are not sufficient because they do not reconstitute forestland ecosystems in their original complexity.

Technology drives the way land is used and changes the face of the earth ever more drastically -- all for one taken-for-granted agenda: to make life increasingly easier and more comfortable for people. We cannot continue to exploit the Earth from a single-species viewpoint.

18. Stony Plain Economic Development Board: Barrie Day

Mr. Day told the panel how the Town of Stony Plain is turning its fortunes around with its new economic development strategy.

The strategy is built around the idea of growth from within. They started by developing the community's existing talent base, identifying more than 480 crafts people operating in the community. Stony Plain has the resources to assist people working at this level. But the community may need assistance from the government in providing mentoring and coaching for those who are ready to develop new markets locally.

Companies ready to move into global marketplaces require provincial assistance in developing processes that will help them grow. This means government may need to restructure its assistance programs and develop its own talent banks to meet these needs. Stony Plain wants to form a partnership with the provincial government to assist the process of growth from within.

Mr. Elzinga offered to have some of his department's international marketing people contact Mr. Day to see where they can begin to work together.

19. Athabasca Regional Economic Development Association: Edwina Bobocel

AREDA held a public workshop in response to the Toward 2000 Together document. Based on the concerns identified in the workshop, AREDA believes the government should:

- Define its role as that of facilitator to business and industry and not be directly involved in management and financing of industry.
- Focus on creating a positive business climate.
- Develop the infrastructure that will allow the economy to build.
- Promote existing strengths and expansion of existing businesses.
- Establish a tax regime that will attract investment to Alberta while maintaining an acceptable level of social services.
- Seek to improve work force skills by ensuring continued training opportunities to meet industry's needs.

Ms. Bobocel was asked what kind of support government should be providing. She pointed to market development as a major area where government could provide information.

20. Canadian Manufacturers Association, Alberta Division: Bob Saari

The Association's submission, "Manufacturing Matters," outlines the significance of manufacturing to the Alberta economy. Among other things, manufacturing:

- accounts for 8% of total economic output in Alberta;
- generates $3 of economic activity for every $1 of output; and
- accounts for 7.5% of the labour force, but more than 10% of total wages and salaries in the province.

"The starting point of any economy is manufacturing -- the making of things." However, the manufacturing sector faces a number of problems in Alberta, including:

- Alberta is the only province in Canada with a machinery and equipment tax at the municipal level.
- Property tax rates are 2 1/2 to 3 times higher than in Ontario and Quebec.
- Lack of government competitiveness.
- High input taxes.
- Electrical Energy Marketing Agency and increased electrical energy costs.

Highlights of the Association's recommendations include:

1. Replace the machinery and equipment tax with a broadly based business tax and/or sales tax, and make other changes to the tax structure to make Alberta manufacturers more competitive.
2. De-regulate natural gas prices, consider de-regulating electrical power, and re-institute the electrical power cost advantage for manufacturers.
3. Work with industry and educators to improve the image of "blue collar" work.
4. Develop a manufacturing strategy.
5. Reduce government by at least one third.

Mr. Main asked what the CMA has done to eliminate the "blue collar" mentality.

Mr. Saari described a program called Skills Canada which introduces school children to trades in the way Junior Achievement introduces them to business.

21. Canadian Chemical Producers Association: Art LeNeveu and Vern Mogensen

The Association has 70 companies in Alberta. Alberta is responsible for about 15% of Canada's output of chemicals and chemical products and over 50% of Canada's petrochemical capacity. The chemical industry has been the fastest growing sector of Alberta's manufacturing industry -- it is currently responsible for 15% of output -- and will shortly be the largest sector.

The Association believes:

1. The government must provide a more competitive business environment and continue its current diversification strategy, ensuring that engines of growth like the chemical industry can continue to expand. The government must also balance the budget, let Albertans know their demands on government must be reasonable, avoid subsidies to industry, and reduce the current high level of transfers to business.

2. Government must take a market-based approach to economic development, letting the market pick the winners and losers. Government's role is to provide a competitive tax regime, invest in human resources, develop infrastructure and stimulate capital markets.

3 Environmental protection must continue to be accorded a high priority but the Association does not agree with the option to "go slow" on economic development unless a new project can be "proven safe". Instead the CCPA's Responsible Care manufacturing code -- by which member companies adopt internal environmental goals and performance standards -- should be a model for all industries. Environmental regulatory requirements should be harmonized within Canada and internationally.

The Association also supports deregulation of the energy and transportation industries.

Mr. Paszkowski asked about the potential for the industry's growth in the 1990s.

Mr. LeNeveu said a total of $4 billion has been invested in the industry to date. That figure could double by the end of the decade.

22. City of St. Albert, Economic Development Advisory Board: Paul Chalifoux, Bruce Randall, Ray Gibbon

The Board recommends that:

1. The present balance between economic development and social services spending should be maintained with emphasis on fiscal responsibility.

2. The government's economic development policy should concentrate on counselling and providing market intelligence, with less emphasis on loans, grants and loan guarantees.

3. The private sector should be encouraged to play a larger role in further education and skills training.

4. The provincial and federal governments should be accountable for setting and enforcing environmental protection standards. The corporate sector should take responsibility for its impact on the environment.

5. The government should concentrate its economic development focus on selling Alberta in the global and national marketplace and should provide local communities with the tools they need to undertake their own local business initiatives.

6. To remain competitive in R&D, high technology, manufacturing and service industries, the government must provide a level playing field, matching support levels provided by other jurisdictions. The government should provide a modest incentive to encourage private sector involvement in R&D.

7. The government should provide more accurate information on Heritage Savings Trust Fund investments and maintain the fund with strong fiscal management policies in order to maintain lower taxes in Alberta.

8. More effort should be made to encourage higher value added to Alberta resource industries.

9. The Business Incubator Program should be continued.

10. The tourism strategy should include more balance in tourism development between northern and southern Alberta, provision of training programs and emphasis on return visits.

Mr. Main asked about how Alberta can provide a level playing field if other jurisdictions offer loan guarantees.

The presenters said that businesses which require such incentives tend not to last.

23. Private Citizen: Tom Eger

Mr. Eger is an active community volunteer and has worked for the past 13 years in the general contracting industry. He pointed out that "Alberta's gifts do not belong to you and me. We are trustees only". We must measure the impact of every economic policy against the yardstick of future generations.

Alberta's diversification program has been generally successful and must continue to play a key role in ensuring our economic prosperity. But our strategies must be refined.

Government must, among other things:

1. Reflect free enterprise principles in its economic development strategy, be more selective and eliminate the risk to the taxpayers. Abandon corporate welfare and politically motivated economic decisions.

2. Focus on smaller businesses and the creation of a more attractive tax and investment climate.

3. Work with business and education to develop produce competitive and motivated workers. Encourage industry to participate financially in education and training as an investment.

4. Not compete with industry, but help businesses succeed by providing marketing and development programs, infrastructure and fair and effective regulation.

5. Set a strong fiscal example from within. Balance the budget.

6. Play a strong role in environmental regulation and enforcement, even if it means the loss of jobs.

Mr. Main asked, with respect to balancing the budget, where the government should cut its expenditures, given that 65% of the budget goes to social services and three-quarters of that amount goes to wages.

Mr. Eger replied that Albertans must either pay higher taxes to keep the social safety net or expect less in the way of social services. Government could also get out of areas that compete with private industry, such as bridge construction in the Transportation Department.

24. Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce: Ace Cetinski

Mr. Cetinski noted that Alberta has more entrepreneurs per capita than any other province or state in North America. But unavailability of equity capital has deterred start-up and expansion in the small business sector. He cited the example of his "ex banker" who said he is no longer interested in "marginal businesses."

To encourage investment of equity capital, Mr. Cetinski proposed a Small Business Equity Capital Tax Incentive (SBECTI) with the following features:

1. Investors would purchase special investee company SBECTI shares with a minimum of $1,000 and maximum of $500,000.

2. The shares would be purchased directly by individual Albertans or Alberta corporations, who would receive SBECTI receipts similar to RRSP receipts.

3. The investor would receive a tax credit of 30% on the investment, refundable to the government if the share is sold within a short time period.

4. Investment proceeds must not be used for lending, foreign investment or non-active business investment.

5. A registry of investors and small businesses requiring equity capital would be maintained.

This program would create jobs while keeping government involvement to a minimum.

25. Urban Core Support Network: Sherry McKibben, Jim Spinelli

The presenters focused on community economic development with emphasis on inner city communities but pointed out that their concepts could be applied equally to small disadvantaged rural communities. They stressed that any economic development strategy must take the disadvantaged into account.

The first goal of community economic development (CED) is to provide jobs within the community using existing resources and skills. Focus must be on creating quality, long-term jobs, and those jobs should be "green". Planning of a community economic development initiative must involve all members of the community.

A CED initiative may require external funding especially in the early stages. But, the cost should be seen as an investment, since funding already goes to the inner city in the form of a social safety net.

Finally, community economic development ensures that the businesses and people involved have a stake in the community.

Mr. Main asked what kind of businesses might result from a CED initiative.

Mr. Spinelli cited examples in Winnipeg and Point St. Charles, Montreal.

Mr. Main asked if such a program might encourage people to take jobs outside the inner city.

Mr. Spinelli said it would work that way if there were ways to help inner city people get to jobs in other areas, such as improved transportation.

26. Edmonton Research Park: Glenn Mitchell

Mr. Mitchell described the Research Park, how it supports development of advanced technology companies, and its role in promoting Edmonton internationally as a research and technology centre.

His submission addressed questions from the Toward 2000 Together document and made the following points:

1. The government must ask itself not what portion of the budget should be spent on economic diversification, but how much spending should be directed to perpetuating the past and present (agricultural subsidies, drilling incentives, social service spending) as opposed to adapting to and creating the future (education, research, infrastructure, holistic health care).

2. Government's role should be to lead, communicate vision, and evaluate future trends. Government should make fewer direct financial investments in businesses and provide broadly based investment incentives, such as lower corporate taxes.

3. Industry should expand its participation in education, both in funding and consulting on future needs. Government should promote alternative forms of post-secondary education, especially non-university. We should look to successful training models, especially apprenticeship systems, in other societies. Skills upgrading must be lifelong and fully supported by government, employers and the tax system.

4. With respect to the priority placed on environmental protection, we should aim for developing leading edge technologies which minimize environmental impact and which can be exported and we should adopt a life-cycle approach to projects, complete with phase-out plans.

5. How important is community development? Not very. If Edmonton and Calgary become internationally competitive there will be a natural spill-over of industrial activity to rural Alberta.

6. Alberta must concentrate on attracting and supporting development of more research-based enterprise, especially through support of a new generation of technology entrepreneurs.

7. The government must choose to be in the forefront of certain industries in which we already have strategic advantage, e.g. medical biotechnology, telecommunications, natural resources.

8. Use the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund only for long-term economic development investment with significant potential for return.

27. Banff National Park: Jan Bloomfield

National parks have played a major role in the development of tourism in Alberta. Research shows that national parks, forests and undisturbed nature influence the choice of vacation destination for 40% of U.S. visitors. The tourism industry in Alberta is based primarily on the attractiveness of its protected areas, therefore Alberta should establish additional parks or protected areas to increase its tourism attractiveness and help achieve Canada's Green Plan goal of protecting 12% of its land area.

The concept of "sustainable tourism" needs to be given more consideration in Alberta's economic planning. This means protecting for future generations the resources on which tourism opportunities are based. The Canadian Parks Service and the tourism industry must work together to ensure long-term sustainability of tourism in the province.

The brief outlines a set of principles of sustainability which are in line with those set forth by the 1987 Brundtland Commission. It also stresses the need for full cost accounting -- including economic, social and environmental costs -- as part of the assessment of implications of any development or use of resources.

Mr. Elzinga asked what portion of Alberta is set aside for protection.

Ms. Bloomfield said Alberta is a leader with about 5% or 6% set aside for protected areas.

28. KenAgra Management Services Ltd.: Ken Stickland

Mr. Stickland is an agricultural economist and entrepreneur and has been involved in the Economic Council of Canada. He voiced concerns about the direction of the Toward 2000 Together economic planning process with respect to rural Alberta.

He said he sees signs of a "Maritimes Fisheries logic" making inroads into rural Alberta in terms of increasing economic dependence as opposed to self-sufficiency. He objects to the "doomsday scenario" painted by the media about rural Alberta. He feels rural Alberta is still vibrant.

He offered the following ideas:

- Business must take more responsibility for manpower training, investing both time and money in training.
- Telecommunications must be put to work more effectively to provide distance education to rural Albertans.
- Instead of a prairie orientation, Alberta should take a Pacific-Northwest point of view with respect to agriculture.
- Alberta is in Canada's "corn belt" and is different from Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Our agricultural future lies with oil seeds and feed grains, the beef and hog industries, and processing.

In questioning, Mr. Stickland suggested that centralized marketing systems have contributed to farmers' increasing dependency mind set.

29. Book Publishers' Association of Alberta: Dennis Johnson

The Association represents 26 publishers covering the spectrum of trade, education, children's, scholarly and specialty publishing. Alberta publishers have led growth in the Canadian book publishing industry since 1985, with total sales in the area of $90 million and growth of 300% since that date. This has been achieved with a very modest investment -- only about $.5 million per year -- on the part of the government.

The BPA believes a strong book publishing industry is essential to a healthy economic and cultural future for Alberta. Up to 70% of all new white-collar jobs being created are related to researching, writing and dissemination of information. Therefore, publishing must be in the forefront of the plan for Alberta's economic future.

In addition to its primary economic role, the book publishing industry plays an important supporting role in other areas of the economy such as tourism and trade by portraying the richness of Alberta's identity to people beyond our borders. A country or community will be more likely to engage in business with another when its people feel familiar with that society.

The industry will also have an enormous role to play in providing the learning materials for the education of the highly skilled people who will be crucial to Alberta's future.

The Alberta book publishing industry is poised to play its full role in the economic future of the province.

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30. Edmonton Recycling Society and Recycling Council of Alberta: Dr. Cornelius Guenter

On behalf of the Recycling Council of Alberta -- a broad-based volunteer organization representing the private sector, the government and private citizens -- Mr. Gunter urged the government to look at privatizing the regulatory processes involving issuance of permits, environmental impact assessments and the governmental review process. A model for this would be the current system for certification of medical practitioners and health care facilities in Alberta. Regulatory activities would be carried out by certified engineers or firms whose work would be monitored by government agencies. This approach would ensure that time is of the essence in the regulatory process, and industry would be able to determine at the outset the type of review required and plan accordingly for the time and cost involved.

Mr. Gunter then reported the results of a workshop spearheaded by the Edmonton Recycling Society and Browning Ferris Industries involving industry decision-makers and representatives from the City of Edmonton and provincial government to provide direction for a recycling strategy.

The workshop recommended that a Ministerial Round Table on Recycling be established. The Round Table would be private sector oriented and function as an independent advisory body representing all interests and providing a consensus for legislative/policy change. Mr. Gunter cited global developments that will place more stringent environmental standards on suppliers of goods and services and present new opportunities and challenges to Alberta businesses in environmental areas. Alberta already is a leader in some of these areas. The Round Table would be proactive, stimulating economic growth and industrial development while addressing the environmental concerns of the day. It would encourage partnerships between government, industry and various labour and community groups to focus on greater efficiency and more creative use of all resources.

Mr. Jonson asked if environmental lobby groups had been consulted with regard to privatization of the regulatory process and if any other jurisdiction has tried such a move.

Mr. Gunter said some groups have been consulted and some are members of the Society. He is not aware of privatization in any other jurisdiction.

31. Securities Marketplace Group: Bill Smith

Mr. Smith reported on recommendations by one of two committees formed at a meeting of industry and government leaders held last November to discuss the Future of Alberta's Securities Marketplace.

The committee had two objectives: to enhance access to capital for Western Canadian-based small capitalization companies and to encourage further development of the infrastructure which supports capital market activities. The committee proposed:

1. A Western Equity Fund: a privately managed equity fund targeted at small and intermediate Western-based companies. The role of government would be to provide some seed capital to get the fund started.

2. Alberta Equity Incentive Program: a tax-based incentive program aimed at fostering investment in emerging Alberta companies. Viable incentive programs might include Alberta Universities Investments for R&D, Alberta Technology Program and Alberta Venture Program, each involving practical support for a particular sector or for emerging companies generally.

3. Western Commodities Exchange: It is surprising that there is no local commodities exchange, given the prominent position of Alberta in the production of agricultural products and natural resources. The support of government and local business leaders could bring this concept into reality.

4. Increased Investor Information Initiatives: While a variety of information delivery systems are already in place, additional information about investment opportunities in Alberta and capital markets is needed to stimulate investment. An example: investor education programs sponsored by parties such as the Alberta Stock Exchange or Investment Dealers' Association.

32. Alberta Chamber of Resources: Don Currie, Lou Hyndman, Dr. Erdal Yildirim

The Chamber commends the suggested vision for Alberta's economy contained in the Toward 2000 Together document but recommends that the words "resource-based" be used to describe the nature of the envisioned internationally competitive economy.

The following beliefs should be the foundation for achieving Alberta's vision:

- Responsible development and upgrading of resources represent significant opportunities for Albertans.

- We must build on existing strengths, including a highly skilled work force and infrastructure. Resource development provides a natural foundation for economic diversification.

- Business should be the key player in the marketplace, endorsed and supported by government.

- Economic development and environmental considerations must be integrated. Government can help by bringing together opposing groups on this issue.

- Government and industry must become globally competitive through innovation, continuous improvement, productivity growth, and providing products that meet marketplace demands.

- Revenue should come primarily from personal and corporate taxes, without heavy reliance on royalties.

The role of government should be to create a competitive economic climate through effective regulations and taxation and by removing impediments to a free marketplace. The role of business is to invest and operate profitably in a globally competitive environment and to provide leadership in R&D. Business, government, university and research institutions should collaborate on developing R&D priorities. The Chamber made several recommendations based on these beliefs.

33. Alberta Industrial Property Taxpayers Group: Mel Coutanche

The Group represents over 190 companies with over 60,000 employees. Its mandate is to improve the competitive position of Alberta industries in the area of total taxation and property taxation in particular.

The Group made a presentation at the Lethbridge Public Forum focusing on the tax situation in Alberta. This presentation addressed:

1. Responsiveness: Responsiveness and flexibility are needed to survive globally. The political process works too slowly for the economic realities of the '90s. The government must act now, not wait for the year 2000.

2. Role of government: Government must create the business climate for wealth generation, provide infrastructure, and promote the concept of "affordable" with respect to social programs as opposed to the concept of "entitlement."

3. Human resource development: Skills required in the workforce change several times in a lifetime. We must modify the curriculum to prepare students for real life by including total quality principles, concepts of basic finance, and wealth generation principles as opposed to wealth consumption.

4. Regional development: Development must be viable on its own merits.

5. Research and Development: Alberta is not large enough to support significant R&D efforts. We should expand in areas in which we already have expertise. Applied research should be market driven and have business sector sponsors and commercial feasibility.

34. Alberta Chamber of Commerce: Darren Reeder

Mr. Reeder prefaced his presentation with the comment that any economic development planning process must start with an across-the-board examination of public sector services. More efficient delivery of government services will help the economy become more competitive.

Mr. Reeder focused on four key areas:

1. Interprovincial trade barriers: The Alberta government must take a lead role in dismantling the current trade barriers, including the multi-level licensing requirements affecting labour and industry groups.

2. Fiscal responsibility and the government's role: Get the provincial deficit under control. Government's role is to create the right environment for business to compete, not to provide incentives to attract new business. Grass roots business people are saying what they need from the government is information and skills, not money. The Chamber recommends that the government review all its incentive programs including loan guarantees and get rid of the ones that are not cost effective.

3. Privatization: Government is in direct competition with the private sector in some key areas, including public works and parks and recreation projects. We can cut costs and improve efficiency by contracting some services out to the private sector. The government should work with the private sector to develop criteria to determine when privatization should be considered. All Crown corporations should have a sunset clause.

4. Taxation: The current system is too complex and inefficient, particularly for small businesses. The cost of compliance is too high. The Chamber recommends eliminating the tax on small business and replacing it with a more progressive tax regime.

Mr. Cherry asked if the government should get out of incentive programs all together.

Mr. Reeder said there is a need for export assistance and assistance for R&D. But "don't make it easy" for business to tap government funding.

Mr. Elzinga agreed government at all levels could become more efficient. He pointed out that California has a population the size of Canada's but a government the size of Quebec's.

35. Edmonton Chamber of Commerce: John Knebel, Dianne Keefe

Mr. Knebel pointed out that resource revenues will not recover in the next decade and our future prosperity depends on a knowledge-based economy.

Ms. Keefe presented the Chamber's brief, which addressed several options Albertans must consider.

1. It will be difficult to control spending on social programs. User fees should be considered.

2. The Chamber perceives an "interventionist tone" in the Toward 2000 Together document. The government should focus on providing an attractive business climate and the infrastructure essential to economic development. Programs should focus on export development. The Alberta Treasury Branches and Alberta Opportunity Company should be considered for privatization.

3. The Chamber recognizes the need for a well-educated work force. The private sector must accept some responsibility for training and retraining with the encouragement of tax incentives. Post-secondary institutions should be allowed to set tuition fees to at least 20% of total operating costs. Government should work with business to develop relevant school curricula.

4. The Chamber supports the concept of sustainable development. Where environmental protection conflicts with economic development, environment should be the priority. Industry should be encouraged through R&D tax credits to seek advancements in environmental products and services.

5. Emphasis on the development of world-class urban centres is preferable to regional development. Economic development funds should not be used to preserve the family farm and rural lifestyle.

6. The government should provide infrastructure and tax credits to lever private sector R&D initiatives.

7. The government should commit Alberta to be in the forefront of high tech industries, but its involvement should be limited to providing R&D infrastructure, education and training, and export promotion, not direct financial assistance for the high tech community.

8. The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund should be used as a stable source of government revenue, not for economic development.

Mr. Jonson asked for clarification on the family farm issue.

Ms. Keefe said any assistance should be transitional to help farmers to retrain. Mr. Knebel added that "the family farm is not a concept that is economic" even with a level playing field internationally. "We have to phase out things that are not essential."

Mr. Cherry said the family farm is "very dear" to his heart and pointed out that the family farm is a victim of unstable global prices. "I believe the family farm is a very important way of life in Alberta today."

36. Forum for Action on Workplace Health and Safety: Larry Odegard and Vincent Fabian

The Forum is a volunteer group representing business, labour and the public sector. The group believes that measures to ensure an injury-free workplace must be key elements of Alberta's economic strategy because workplace injuries affect productivity and provincial spending on health and social services as well as the welfare of workers.

There has been limited improvement in the provincial lost-time injury rate since the mid-1980's. On average about 120 workers have died each year as a consequence of their work. Each injury claim costs the Workers' Compensation Board an average of $10,000. WCB premiums add, on average, 2% to the cost of doing business.

Many employers, including governments, still regard occupational health and safety as a cost rather than an investment in their workforce and their business. Available prevention technology and accepted practice are not being used to the fullest extent.

The Forum recommends that Alberta's economic strategy incorporate principles recognizing that protection of worker health is a core element of Alberta's way of doing business and that safety is an essential work skill. Some recommendations:

- Safety should be part of the core curriculum for all training programs.
- Safety should be introduced to all students before they leave high school.
- All bids by subcontractors must demonstrate measures to protect worker health and safety.
- Impact on workers must be part of all economic and environmental impact assessments and safety must be part of workplace design.

The government should provide leadership by endorsing safe work as an Alberta value, giving it a place in Alberta's economic strategy, and providing an example. Specifically government should:

- make a long-term commitment to the Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program;
- require all government suppliers and organizations that receive government operating grants to demonstrate measures to protect worker health and safety; and
- include workplace heath and safety as a component of management assistance provided to small business.

37. Metro Edmonton Economic Development Team: John Barnard

MEEDT is an organization of economic developers representing the 19 communities that make up the Metro Edmonton Region. The presentation addressed six central issues:

1. Diversification: Initiatives should be focused on "sunrise" business and industry, specifically advanced technology and knowledge-based industries.

2. Job creation: Government should not "buy jobs." Rather, government should encourage growth of locally generated businesses.

3. Education and training: Educational institutions, government, industry and the individual should work in partnership to develop a globally competitive work force.

4. Environment: There can be no compromise. We must ensure that our environment is fully protected. Environmental industries offer an excellent opportunity to diversify our economy.

5. Urban/rural development: The focus must be directed to areas that can provide the critical mass to generate meaningful economic activity. We cannot afford to direct resources to communities which have little potential for increasing the GDP of the province.

38. Alberta Home Builders' Association: Dennis Little

The Association notes that, while the housing and land development industry contributes in excess of $2 billion annually to the GDP, the Toward 2000 Together document does not mention the industry, nor is there a ministry to address the needs of the industry.

The housing industry will play a vital role in the future economic growth of the province. The industry's structure is generally small and entrepreneurial and it places a high priority on flexibility.

The Association feels:

1. The root cause of the government's current budgetary problems is a "protectionist philosophy" which ignores personal responsibility in favour of "inappropriate legislation, rules and regulations." We should reduce the cost of our legislative infrastructure as a major way to help our industries become more globally competitive.

2. It is time to review the Planning Act, which delegates responsibility for administration of the act to municipalities, and find ways to provide a more workable legislative environment that balances the need for public input with the industry's need to be able to plan with an element of certainty.

3. Provincial funding cuts are forcing municipalities to require the industry to front end trunk servicing costs. We must find ways to equitably distribute infrastructure costs without unfairly loading these costs solely on new home owners.

4. Servicing standards required by our municipalities are now set at the high end of the scale. These standards should be required to meet cost benefit criteria.

5. The industry is suffering from a lack of skilled trades people. We need to create an attitude that a highly skilled technical career is a valuable commodity and to provide training opportunities at all levels of the educational system.

6. We should look at Alberta-developed housing technology as an exportable product.

Mr. Elzinga pointed out that the call for a Ministry of Housing is at odds with many submissions calling for a reduction in the size of government.

39. Northern Alberta Institute of Technology: Dr. S.G. Souch

To be competitive Alberta needs a highly skilled technical workforce. "We're in a horse race and the province has to back the winners. If we want to maintain our social programs ....wealth-generating career training must be given priority."

NAIT reaffirms its commitment to cooperating with government and industry in achieving the province's economic development goals.

NAIT together with SAIT trains more than three quarters of Alberta's apprentices and four out of every five engineering technologists. NAIT's unique capacities are focused on wealth-generating occupations, such as engineering and science-based technology, and trades.

NAIT is the largest technical institute in Canada and Alberta's largest non-university institution. The government should back NAIT because that's where the critical mass in technical education is. Economic progress in the year 2000 will depend on a superior technical infrastructure.

Mr. Jonson asked why there are not enough skilled workers?

The response was that the bottleneck is not in institutional capacity but in the availability of apprenticeship positions in industry. The point was made that the real problem is our attitude toward skilled work and trades.

Dr. Souch concluded with the point that NAIT is incorporating total quality management into its curriculum to make its graduates more competitive.

40. Alberta Plastics Recycling Association: Gary Horan

The Association represents industries that make and use plastics. Plastic is much maligned as a packaging material because it is inordinately endurable, but it is also totally recyclable.

The Association was incorporated to develop a plastics collecting, resorting and reprocessing infrastructure that will make Alberta a model for effective plastics waste management and recycling.

The Association works with entrepreneurs, government and strategic partners to achieve solutions. One solution it proposes is a Super Fund: 40% to provide low-interest loans or loan guarantees because reprocessing technology is expensive; 40% to establish recycling programs in the form of grants to municipalities; 10% for a provincial centre for waste reduction and recycling; and 10% for an office of waste minimization and recycling.

The Association contends that a product is not recycled until it is reprocessed and marketed cost competitively. It hopes to establish in Alberta a model for effective plastics recycling.

41. Van Horne Institute for International Transportation and Regulatory Affairs: Merrienne Duncan

The Institute is being established to address critical transportation and regulatory issues facing industry in continental and international markets. It supports industry through education, analysis and forums on current transportation (both goods and passenger) matters.

The Institute held a forum to provide input to the Toward 2000 Together process. Recommendations included:

1. Simplifying and harmonizing regulations and eliminating duplication to create a level playing field. While regulations across Canada are harmonized, implementation varies.

2. Creating a level playing field in taxation. Tax burden differentials from north to south hamper competitiveness of the Canadian transportation industry.

3. Productivity improvements through better labour-management relations and restrictions on asset rationalization to lower cost of transport.

4. Changes in federal transportation legislation -- specifically the Western Grain Transportation Act and the West Coast Ports Act -- would reflect acceptance of the reality of international competition.

5. Infrastructure renewal should have priority over new infrastructure.

6. The burden of compliance with environmental regulations should be reduced through harmonizing and rationalizing.

7. Safety could be self-policed, because it is in the industry's best interests.

8. Education of trained transportation management professionals would increase productivity.

9. Transportation R&D would benefit Alberta business and provide an exportable commodity.

10. Intermodal integration in passenger transportation would benefit tourism and the general public.

11. Tourism marketing should use electronic information systems to support a seamless transportation system. As businesses economize on time by using electronic communications, tourists become the primary travellers.

12. Innovative financing is required to reduce the taxation burden and still provide improved transportation systems.

A common theme through all recommendations was a stress on a partnership approach rather than a confrontational approach.

42. Edmonton Friends of the North: Lorraine Vetsch

The organization considers the expansion of Alberta's pulp industry as a diversification disaster. The group made the following points:

- A full analysis of the cradle-to-grave costs of a diversification strategy must be done before it is put into effect.

- Diversification strategies must have independent third party scientific assessment with full-blown public hearings with access to intervenor funding and information. Panels must be joint federal, provincial and local entities. Recommendations must be binding and politicians accountable for the policies they implement.

- The Environment Minister must be a member of the inner cabinet or priorities committee.

- Sustainable development must be defined to mean: economic decisions must be environmentally sound; government policies must anticipate and prevent environmental damage; polluters must pay for environmental harm; citizens have the right to participate in decision making without having to prove they are directly affected.

- Human health must be protected.

- Diversification activities must not violate existing government policies or degrade the environment around disputed native land claim areas.

- Diversification must not advance if it destroys other industries, such as tourism and recreation. Numerous rivers are no longer fishable due to pulp mill pollution.

- There should be no loan guarantees to companies that take value-added production out of Alberta.

- There should be no more investment in "dinosaur technologies. No one wants bleached kraft pulp any more."

Mr. Jonson asked if the group is looking for a simplified environmental assessment process.

Ms. Vetsch pointed to Alpac as a model. The process worked, although its recommendations weren't binding. The NRCB hearings are too local in focus and represent a step back.

43. Canadian Organization of Small Business: Don Eastcott

The Organization presented a philosophical paper. Some highlights:

- There is a need for an intelligence system in Alberta to let people know what is going on in the rest of the world. Albertans have a poor understanding of how things work in the global marketplace.
- There is too much emphasis on government doing things for us. There should be more of a partnership with emphasis on the competitive enterprise sector.
- The basis of all economies is small enterprise, and probably manufacturing enterprise. Alberta is now incredibly well-positioned to move into knowledge-based enterprise.
- On behalf of the Canadian Business Innovation Centre, Mr. Eastcott pointed out there is a need to understand the role of incubators and to provide additional assistance at a second level when businesses are ready to move out on their own.
- Historically we never have had the vision to recognize our success stories, and consequently have seen many things in Alberta disappear to become successes elsewhere.
- Canada per capita is the best utilizer of dollars spent on training and R&D, but unfortunately we export our technology and brains and get nothing in return.
- The organization is concerned about encroachment of government into the private sector. For instance, hospitals are now sending out their instrument technicians to do work that could be done by the private sector.

Open Forum

44. Private Citizen: Doug Pruden

Mr. Pruden is a designer and NAIT graduate and volunteer with youth. He focused on ways to reduce the dropout rate and crime committed by youth. The economic costs of a 30% dropout rate and consequent high crime rate are great.

Mr. Pruden recommended:

1. Youth should be rewarded for good behaviour. For instance, money saved in vandalism costs could be reallocated to providing rewards.
2. Government must become approachable by young people.
3. Educators must work with other agencies to do what it takes to make young people more productive members of society. Education must become an "experience."
4. Parents must become more involved with schools.
5. Spiritual attitudes should be promoted so children will develop an inner sense of who they are.
6. There should be tougher penalties for vandalism and theft.

7. There should be an annual week-long convention for youth sponsored by industry, bringing leaders of government, industry, entertainment and other successful people to meet and talk with students in person. "Kids need to see success up close and feel success."

The youth of 2000 will be a contributor not a taker from society and will know what to do with the wealth they create: to share it and let others know how to attain it. The youth of 2000 will love school. All youths will have foster children in order to know how to take care of someone else. They will also know how to express their concerns to government.

45. Grant MacEwan Community College: Dr. Gerald Kelly

The economic health of a region is the degree to which it can develop the potential of its people.

Education is at the core of an information-based economy.

The unmet demand for access to post-secondary education is at 10:1 at the entry level of colleges and technical institutes. Ninety-three percent of Grant MacEwan graduates get jobs.

The major issue is how will we pay for post-secondary education? The Grant MacEwan model sees the first and second years as primarily government funded. A partnership of the individual, industry and government would develop a work/study pattern for the third and fourth years and life-long learning.

Alberta's colleges, technical institutes and universities can be an industry in themselves. "If we build the infrastructure, they will come." We can market education on a world scale.

To promote quality work environments, we should look around the world to see where the most productive labour forces are. We need to involve people in how organizations are run in order to benefit from their full potential.

Colleges must expose students to entrepreneurial skills in order to help build an entrepreneurial culture.

46. Private Citizen: Bruce Matichuk

Mr. Matichuk is a partner in CEL Software Inc.

He said Alberta has a "technology problem." There needs to be a change of attitude at a more basic level if we are to be competitive. But only industries which can adapt technology and change with the times will be competitive.

There is a lack of knowledge in Alberta about emerging technologies, applications of technology, and ability to apply cross-fertilization of technology. All industries are becoming technology-intensive, displacing workers worldwide, even in fisheries and farming.

Alberta has a significant telecommunications disadvantage. It costs $1 per minute to call Chicago from Alberta, but only 11 cents per minute to call Alberta from Chicago.

If we stay on our present course in education we will decline in world competitiveness. We must become committed to a province-wide learning technology and network.

We need to develop an Alberta-wide information network comparable to the electronic "superhighways" being developed in the U.S. We need to develop a multi-media system that, through a TV camera will put in the hands of every Albertan a computer without their having to purchase one.

We must be committed to getting hold of targeted products, such as smart robots. We also need low-cost communications. We need to be aware of emerging technologies and to lead in these technologies.

We must target 100-per-cent labour elimination, not focus on creating jobs. Along with this, industry must become responsible for its employees, for developing their educational skills and keeping them in the business, as is done in Japan.

There needs to be a cross-section of industry, government and education to formulate government policy and provide the complex information industries need to make decisions about future direction.

Government's role is to encourage collaboration through consortiums. Education must be privatized and personalized to give people their choice of education when and where they need it. There must be a commitment to delivery of education to every Albertan through the phone system.

Technology will create huge waves. There is technology in the lab now that we cannot even conceive of. Alberta is not ready.